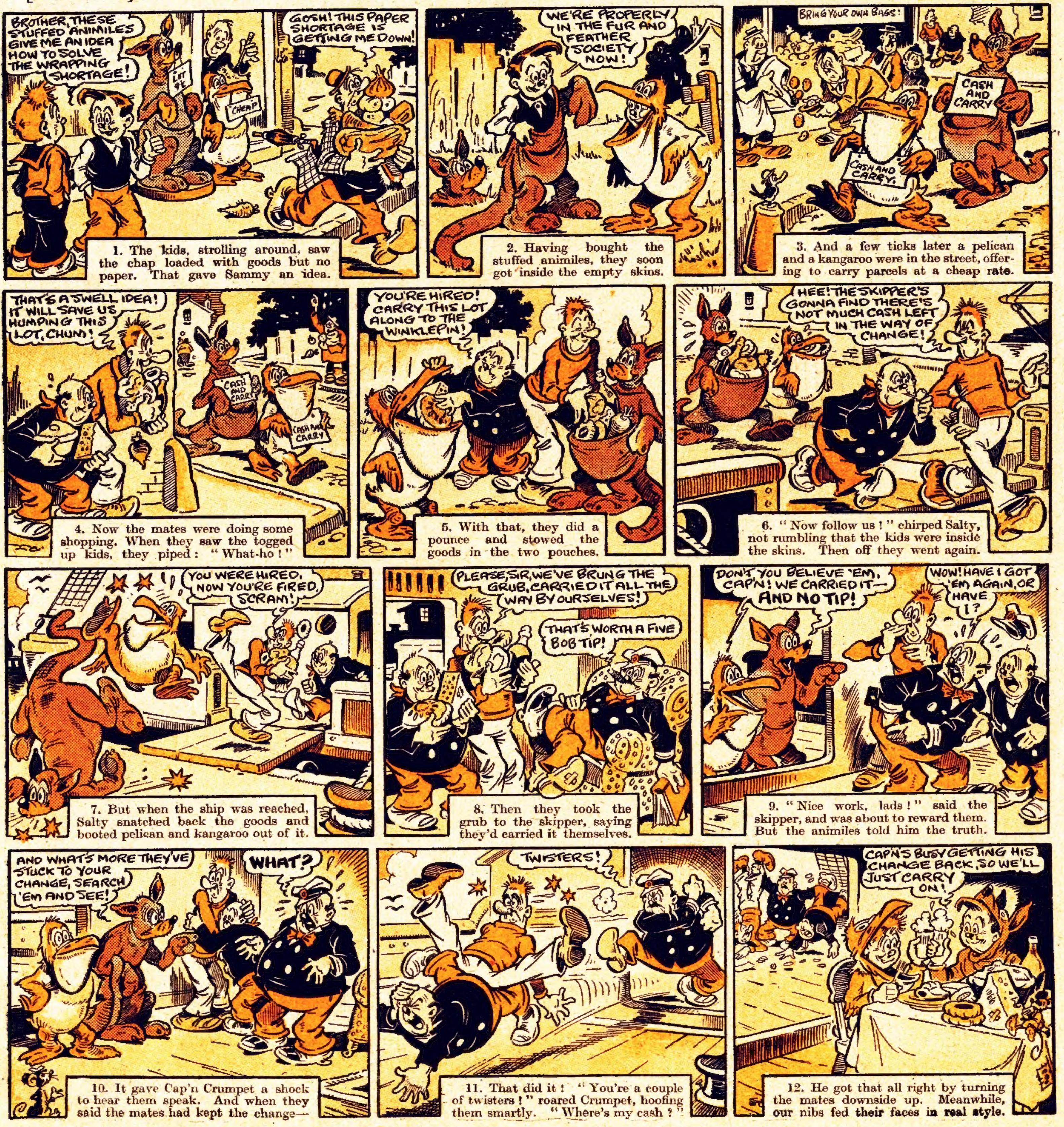
COMIC CUTS 2D.

FLAMING DRAGON!

This thrilling war story appears inside, with three other grand yarns and a host of funny pictures.

[No. 2,687.] [APRIL 25, 1942.]

THE CRUSOE KIDS GO INTO BUSINESS AND CARRY ALL BEFORE THEM!


BROTHER, THESE STUFFED ANIMILES GIVE ME AN IDEA HOW TO SOLVE THE WRAPPING SHORTAGE!
LOT 9K
CHEAP
GOSH! THIS PAPER SHORTAGE IS GETTING ME DOWN!
WE'RE PROPERLY IN THE FUR AND FEATHER SOCIETY NOW!
BRING YOUR OWN BAGS!
CASH AND CARRY
CASH AND CARRY.
THAT'S A SWELL IDEA! IT WILL SAVE US HUMPING THIS LOT, CHUM!
CASH AND CARRY
CASH AND CARRY
YOU'RE HIRED! CARRY THIS LOT ALONG TO THE WINKLEPIN!
HEE! THE SKIPPER'S GONNA FIND THERE'S NOT MUCH CASH LEFT IN THE WAY OF CHANGE!
YOU WERE HIRED, NOW YOU'RE FIRED. SCRAM!
PLEASE, SIR, WE'VE BRUNG THE GRUB, CARRIED IT ALL THE WAY BY OURSELVES!
THAT'S WORTH A FIVE BOB TIP!
DON'T YOU BELIEVE 'EM, CAP'N! WE CARRIED IT— AND NO TIP!
WOW! HAVE I GOT 'EM AGAIN, OR HAVE I?
AND WHAT'S MORE THEY'VE STUCK TO YOUR CHANGE, SEARCH 'EM AND SEE!
WHAT?
TWISTERS!
CAP'N'S BUSY GETTING HIS CHANGE BACK, SO WE'LL JUST CARRY ON!

1. The kids, strolling around, saw the chap loaded with goods but no paper. That gave Sammy an idea.

2. Having bought the stuffed animiles, they soon got inside the empty skins.

3. And a few ticks later a pelican and a kangaroo were in the street, offering to carry parcels at a cheap rate.

4. Now the mates were doing some shopping. When they saw the togged up kids, they piped: "What-ho!"

5. With that, they did a pounce and stowed the goods in the two pouches.

6. "Now follow us!" chirped Salty, not rumbling that the kids were inside the skins. Then off they went again.

7. But when the ship was reached, Salty snatched back the goods and booted pelican and kangaroo out of it.

8. Then they took the grub to the skipper, saying they'd carried it themselves.

9. "Nice work, lads!" said the skipper, and was about to reward them. But the animiles told him the truth.

10. It gave Cap'n Crumpet a shock to hear them speak. And when they said the mates had kept the change—

11. That did it! "You're a couple of twisters!" roared Crumpet, hoofing them smartly. "Where's my cash?"

12. He got that all right by turning the mates downside up. Meanwhile, our nibs fed their faces in real style.

ROVER JOE

The Smiling Stranger.

IT was the end of the spring "round-up" season in Mesquite County, Wyoming, and the hard-working citizens of Tin Cup town were enjoying themselves

For weeks past ranchers, cowpunchers, horse-wranglers, and range cooks had been working like heroes on the open ranges, in fair weather and foul. Now that all the cattle and calves were safely brought in and counted, after the long winter, Tin Cup was celebrating in royal Western style.

"Thunderin' cats, this is a proper kick-up, ain't it, Sleepy? Reminds me of Dodge City, years ago, at its noisiest!"

Thus Rover Joe, as, fresh from the trail himself he slid down off his old grey horse and cheerfully surveyed the happy throng

Money was plentiful in Tin Cup now, for the ranchers had sold cattle at good prices and all hands had been paid. Cowpunchers, with bulging pockets, were eager to make the money fly.

"Well, I guess we'll look up some old friends, Sleepy, and have a little spree ourselves!"

Rover Joe was smiling, when his wandering eyes settled suddenly on a man who was crossing the street.

He was a big, red-faced, jolly-looking man of about forty. He wore an expensive grey flannel suit, neat buckskin shoes, and a silk shirt. A broad sash of red silk encircled his generous waist, and on his fingers sparkled some real fine diamonds.

"H'm! Now where have I seen you before?" murmured Rover Joe.

Suddenly two merry young men, engaged in a friendly tussle, romped right across the man's path, and he appeared to walk into them without noticing. The next instant those cowboys barged him over, good and hearty.

"Oh, gee! Awful sorry, mister!" cried the 'punchers.

But the fat man only chuckled good-naturedly and started to pick himself up.

As he did so, however, a gleaming cascade of precious stones came tinkling out of his inside pocket on to the ground.

At once the fat man and his jewels became the target of all eyes. For the gems were diamonds—real, genuine beauties

A respectful whistle went up from the bystanders.

"Ah, now, lads, don't fuss about me; it was an accident!" the stout man chuckled at the apologetic cowboys. "As for the diamonds—well, I've got plenty, and I know where to find plenty more! Pick 'em up for me, will you? I'm getting too fat to stoop much."

There was a laugh as the cowboys nervously gathered up the sparkling gems. But, for the most part, the bystanders gazed with awe at a man who could carry so many jewels in his pocket and not worry much about them!

"You say you've got plenty of these, mister?" queried a cowboy respectfully. "Gee, what are you, a millionaire?"

"Well, not quite that, my boy," beamed the fat man. "My name is Willoughby Tobson, and—well, I own some good diamond mines, that's all. Matter o' fact, that's why I'm visiting your fine town to-day. I'm here to sell your banker, Mr. Pearson, some shares in my biggest mine!"

"Thunder! I'd like to own shares in a diamond mine that gives such beauties as those!" blurted a rancher, patting his own pocket. "Couldn't you sell us some shares, Mr. Tobson?"

"No, boys. Sorry!" beamed Tobson kindly. "Now, don't get disappointed. It's not that I don't want to sell you any shares, but—well, now, what do you fellows know about such things? You're all cowmen, and you know how to make money out of cattle. You stick to that, boys, and leave diamond shares to bankers and financiers and people who understand all about them."

"Aw, shucks now, Mr. Tobson!" protested a cowboy, speaking for them all. "Come on, be a sport and give us a chance."

"Hear, hear!" chorused the others, already dreaming dreams of diamonds.

But, for the moment, Mr. Willoughby Tobson did not answer.

All suddenly, his twinkling eyes had fallen on Rover Joe's homely brown face. The fat man stared; then he looked away quickly and shrugged his stout shoulders.

"Well, boys, I don't know what to do, for I've never done business this way before" he smiled. "But, my word, you seem a real decent lot, and I'd like to oblige you.

"So now, how's this for a scheme? I've only got two hundred ten-dollar shares with me, which I brought for Mr. Pearson, but I'll sell you those if you like. And if it'll make you any happier, you can buy these diamonds I brought to show him. You can give me the money now, for I've got to travel on to Buckeye City this evening, or you can pay it into the bank for me, which you please. But if you do want to buy, it'll be first come, first served, so line up and make it snappy!"

All jostling and shoving, cowboys, ranchers, and citizens fell into line, each of them digging up what money he had. Then Willoughby Tobson produced a gilt-edged notebook. Carefully he wrote down each man's name and address. Next, he handed over the number of beautifully printed shares they bought before he even took a penny.

Nevertheless he did take the money until all the shares were gone, and the groans of the disappointed ones rang loud. After that, Willoughby Tobson proceeded to sell his diamonds, which went like hot cakes

Pockets that had been bulging not long before became very lean then, and Rover Joe reckoned that Willoughby Tobson had collected the best part of six thousand dollars.

But he seemed quite satisfied, and the cattlemen of Tin Cup were openly delighted. Visions of wealth still dazzled them. Gloating over their lovely share-cards and diamonds, they cheered Willoughby Tobson royally when he started out for Buckeye City at last in a smart buggy.

Rover Joe, however, did not join in the cheers.

He was worried and puzzled. He knew that he had seen Willoughby Tobson before, years ago, but, to save his life, he could not remember where. Such forgetfulness always got Joe's goat.

Finally, he left the noisy town and went for a lonely mooch-round outside in the dusk, with Sleepy patiently plodding after him as usual.

"Doggone it, can't you remember that fat guy, Sleepy?" Joe exploded at last. "I know him all right—only his name was not Willoughby Tobson then, and he wasn't no diamond financier either! What's more, he recognised me; I saw that in his eyes. But who—where—— Yippee!"

Giving vent to a sudden, subdued cry, Joe snapped his fingers as memory stirred.

"Smiling Tom Lingle, that's him!" he cried. "Yeah, I've fixed him now—Smiling Tom, they called him, the fat, cunning crook who was mixed up with Slick Brown's gambling gang in Houston about eight years ago! That's him sure enough, alias Willoughby Tobson now and—fool that I am—I'll bet I've let him swindle all these decent folk in Tin Cup! Doggone my rotten memory! I'll——"

Full of a sudden resolve, Rover Joe swung round to leap on Sleepy's back.

And it was that sharp movement alone which saved the little adventurer's life!

Sheriff Martin Takes Charge.

CRACK! Even as Joe whirled, a gun spat redly in the twilight and a bullet shaved his ear. Three Mexican loafers, the sort that can always be found even in the best Wild West towns, came charging at him from out of some trees.

Joe, ducking low, gun-swiped the first desperado, while Sleepy kicked the second head over heels. Then Joe and Sleepy hit the third man both together and pretty nigh wrecked him.

Nor did Joe waste so much as a glance on them again, for he guessed they were only no-account ruffians who had been stealthily hired to put him out of the way. He jumped on Sleepy. He rode quickly round the outskirts of Tin Cup, then he hit the trail to Buckeye City as fast as his old grey warrior could gallop.

Rover Joe, in fact, vanished from that neighbourhood for about an hour. At the end of that time, he and Sleepy jogged back to Tin Cup, made a brief halt on the edge of it, then rode straight on into the town.

And they got there just in time for a most dramatic event!

Craa-aack! Bang, bang, bang!

Into Tin Cup, from the other direction, spurred four dark figures on dust-grimed horses, with their leader firing his gun into the air to attract attention. The newcomers dropped wearily off their horses at the first hitch-rack. Then they thrust their way through to the steps of the Tin Cup bank.

And, as the excited citizens gathered round them and the lights revealed all four, it was seen that the grim, dust-caked leader wore a sheriff's star!

"Boys, I'm Sheriff Martin, from Mesquite!" he cried, breathing hard. "Tell me now, has there been a fat, well-dressed, smiling hombre in Tin Cup to-day, calling himself Willoughby Tobson? He calls himself a diamond financier and travels with a pocketful o' gems! Quick, now, anybody seen him?"

They were fast gunmen, but Rover Joe taught them what real speed meant!

The Tin Cupites gaped in alarm.

"Yeah, Mr.—Mr. Willoughby Tobson's been here to-day, and left fer Buckeye City just before dusk," stammered a rancher at last. "The fact is, sheriff, he sold us some shares in his mine—and the diamonds!"

"Then you've been swindled!" snapped Sheriff Martin. "Dad-bust that cunning fat crook! Me and my posse have chased him half over Wyoming, and we're always just too late! No, you ain't been swindled over the diamonds—they're real enough. But they're only the bait he uses to catch suckers with, and I'll bet you right now he dropped 'em out here in the street so's everybody could see!"

Y-yes!" gulped the rancher feebly. "He—did!"

"His usual trick!" rapped the sheriff. "He's played that racket in half a dozen other towns already. Sorry, boys, but you'll have to hand back all them diamonds you bought, 'cos they'll be needed as evidence.

"No, don't give 'em to me, though—I ain't got the warrant yet to collect 'em. Make your local banker open his office and store the diamonds in his safe. He'll give you a receipt, and I'll collect 'em when I get my warrant. Meanwhile, soon as we've snatched some grub and got fresh hosses, we'll chase after Willoughby Tobson again.

"In fact, if you've got any sense, you'll chase him yourselves the minute you've lodged them diamonds in the bank. Come to think of it, he may not have gone to Buckeye City at all, the slippery toad! That trail splits up four ways at Sandy Crossing, don't it?"

"You're telling us!" yelled a cowboy. "Come on, boys, let's put our diamonds in the bank for safety, then we'll split up and hunt that smiling skunk north, south, east, an' west!"

The cheated crowd took fire. Banker Pearson was fetched from his house, and soon he and two assistants were feverishly writing out receipts for diamonds in the bank, as the gems were handed in.

After that, there was a mighty stampede in pursuit of Willoughby Tobson, alias Smiling Tom Lingle. In no time at all, Tin Cup town was left practically empty of men.

Yet, when the hunters had gone, Sheriff Martin and his posse seemed in no hurry to follow. Strangely enough, they exchanged furtive grins.

"Well, bust me!" sneered the sheriff, listening to the fast-retreating hoofbeats. "I've met some suckers before, but this Tin Cup bunch beat the band! Smiling Tom picked an easy job this time, I guess. C'mon now! We'll polish this town off quickly!"

Covered by darkness, they entered the bank once more. They drew guns on the bewildered banker and his assistants, then herded them into a corner. The sheriff himself grabbed Mr. Pearson's keys. He was chuckling as he opened the strong-room door.

"Talk about easy!" repeated the treacherous crook. "Smiling Tom's rooked these mugs for six thousand dollars already, and now we get back the diamonds he sold 'em. Also, we empty the bank of all its money, while the giddy hunters are out hunting. And then——"

"And then you wake up!" drawled the genial voice of Rover Joe

Wraith-like, the little adventurer had glided into the bank, catching those over-confident crooks beautifully napping!

Round whirled Martin & Co., grabbing savagely at their weapons. They were fast gunmen, but Joe taught them what real speed meant.

"Ooh!" groaned Martin, collapsing with a bullet through his arm.

A second thief pitched on top of him, and that was that.

Terrified by Joe's uncanny speed, the others surrendered, pale as death. Echoes thundered through the bank. Rover Joe, still smiling, cocked an eye at the elderly banker.

"Mr. Pearson," he drawled, "I'm afraid all the town's fighting-men are out on a wild-goose chase, so we'll keep these jaspers safe till they come back.

"But I—I don't understand," quavered Mr. Pearson. "How is it you came here just at the right time? Did you know these blackguards were crooks?"

"Well, I suspicioned somethin' of the sort when I took a quick, quiet look at their hosses," grinned Joe. "All your townsfolk were too excited to do that. Those crooks' hosses are sure dusty—but it's dry dust rubbed on to the animals' hides in handfuls. Martin & Co. said they'd been riding hard all day. Yet their hosses hadn't sweated or lathered enough to get their skins damp!

"No, sir. I reckon these snakes came jogging towards Tin Cup by easy stages. Then they halted about a mile outside, covered themselves and their hosses with dust, and arrived here on the rush. Willoughby Tobson had already swindled the town out of six thousand dollars with fake mining shares. It was this fake sheriff's job to lure your men away and then rob the bank of its own money and the diamonds Tobson had sold! But it didn't come off."

Rover Joe laughed.

"As for Willoughby Tobson," he went on, "I've already nailed that fat serpent myself! He hired three greasers to shut my mouth, for he knew I'd remember him sooner or later. So I galloped after Fatty Tobson, smacked him on the jaw, and brought him back here—with his six thousand dollars!

"He's lying outside the town now, gagged and bound. Tin Cup will get all its money back, Mr. Pearson."

(Another grand Rover Joe story in next Friday week's number.)

25-4-42

FLAMING DRAGON!

A thrilling story of our Valentine Tank chums.

A tongue of flame leapt from the steel spout full against the petrol drums!

Trapped in the Blizzard.

"EASE up, Tich!" snapped Sergeant Tom Arnold. "There's no use in groping along in this crazy weather."

Corporal Tich Worley, driver of the sixteen-ton Valentine tank named the Jumbo, sighed with relief.

"'Ee 'twas what I were thinkin' meself, owd lad!" he panted. "I can't see more'n an armslength in front o' me."

Thump! The tank came to a full stop in the narrow ravine with a jerk that jolted every bone in Tom's body.

"You dope!" he spluttered. "I suppose that's how you used to stop the blessed tram you drove in Wigford before the war?"

The third member of the tank's crew, a dusky West Indian called Private Elias Button—better known in the Army as "Rusty" Button—shuffled back into the gunner's seat from which he had slipped.

"G-golly!" he stuttered. "Dese shake-ups am sure pow'ful bad fo' de cistern!"

"Begoom! What about me own system, tha big bashi-bazook?" retorted Tich. "T' Jumbo hit somethin'—a ridge o' solid ice, I'm thinkin'." The tank was halted with the engine shut off, and he added glumly: "This perishin' weather is worse'n what I had for me last summer's holiday at Blackpool afore t' war."

The little Lancastrian, expert driver and mechanic, had good cause to complain. The Russian snows were melting in warm spring sunshine when the tank had set out on a lone scouting patrol from the base at Olniv. Then, almost without warning, the worst blizzard of the year had burst in awe-inspiring fury.

For some time the tank had proceeded slowly. The gun hatch was closed, and it was cosy inside now that there were no more violent lurches to rattle the bones of the crew. But the enforced halt might prove dangerous.

"We're ten miles behind the enemy lines, chums," remarked Tom, consulting the map; "leastways, behind the advanced German outposts. If I'd smelt the kind of storm that was blowing up I'd have found a hideout."

"'Ee, we're snug enough, sarge," grinned Tich. "They Jerries aren't likely to be roamin' round this weather."

"Dat sounds hoss-sense to me," nodded Rusty. "We'se ain't a-goin' to find Jerry tanks all around us when de blizzard blows itself out. How far am we f'om dis place we'se supposed to take a squint at, Massa Tom?"

"It's about another four miles to the south-east," Tom answered. "If the weather clears we should be able to see the viaduct and the railway line when we top the ridge three miles from here."

That part of the railroad, running from west to east, was in German hands. The viaduct—a bridge built of giant timbers—had been smashed a month earlier by Soviet bombers. Since then the planes had had no luck, chiefly owing to unfavourable weather conditions. The task given to Tom and his crew was to find out whether this important structure known as the Klev Viaduct was now in a state of repair. If it were, a quick re-grouping of the Russian army divisions would be necessary, because German troops and supplies could be rushed by rail for a new offensive in the area due east of the terminus of the line.

Directly the blizzard gave over Tom intended to evade the German strong-points, take a look at the viaduct, and scurry back to Olniv to report to Major Randall, commander of the tank squadron.

An hour dragged by whilst the wind, screeching through the ravine, lashed snow round the white-painted, frost-rimed tank.

"The wind's dying down, fellows," Tom ejaculated at last. "Here, shift yourself, Rusty, and let me take a peep through the hatch."

Snow was still swirling in the ravine when he looked out, but the weather conditions were distinctly better. He peered ahead and saw a ridge of hard snow against which the tank had bumped. Then he turned round, gazed astern, and uttered a cry of surprise.

"Jove! Look what's here! Slew the gun, Rusty!"

A strange-looking vehicle was halted less than fifty yards behind the tank. As he looked, a man got out of it and staggered forward. There was no sign of anyone else.

Tom whipped out his revolver, and, seeing the man fall headlong, swung to the ground and hurried to him. Tich also climbed out and joined him.

"Wheee! That's a champion sable coat he's got on!" Tich breathed. "He pinched it from t' Russkies, I'll bet."

Stooping low, Tom rolled the man over and saw the gleam of an Iron Cross through a rent in the rich overcoat.

"He's a Jerry," he muttered. "Take a look at that 'bus' of his, Tich. Make sure there's no one inside."

Tom opened the sable coat and gave a faint whistle. The man was an officer—a high-ranking officer, judging by the galaxy of decorations on his field-grey uniform.

The victim opened his eyes and blinked dazedly.

"How do you feel, mein herr?" Tom inquired in fluent German. "What has happened? Are others near?"

The officer hardly appeared to see him.

"Himmel! Curse this climate!" he panted. "I—I am your general—General Wilhelm von Stromm. I seek the Klev Viaduct."

"So do I, mein herr," smiled Tom.

The dazed general blissfully supposed he had made contact with a German unit. In stammering tones he explained that he had set out by car with two members of his staff to inspect the work on the viaduct. It was to be a surprise visit to the engineers, who were unaware that any high officer was in the sector.

But a Russian Stormovik bomber had damaged the car, killed the two officers, and left himself suffering from concussion. Then, proceeding on foot, he had found an abandoned vehicle whose driver had obviously become a deserter. It was in running order and he had driven to the ravine in it; then, seeing the tank when the blizzard had died down a little, he had got out to make inquiries.

Little Tich crept up behind and gave the "thumbs up" to indicate that no other enemies were around.

The general shook his head, struggled to his feet, and adjusted a monocle attached to a black cord.

"Blizten!" he exclaimed brusquely. "Who are you?"

Tom slid the revolver against his sable overcoat.

"Just a British sergeant, mein general," he smiled. "And you are my prisoner."

The Destroying Flame!

THE monocle fell out of General von Stromm's eye.

"M-mein flammerwerfer!" he choked, and turned as if to run back to the queer-looking vehicle he had driven.

"Halt!" Tom snapped. "I should be sorry to have to shoot you."

The general recovered himself, and stood muttering under his breath whilst this automatic pistol was taken from him.

"What did he say about a flammen-somethin'?" inquired Tich.

"A flammenwerfer! That's what the thing is—a flame-thrower!" Tom exclaimed. A far-away look came into his eyes, and a daring plan took form in his astute brain. "Phew! I may be able to find a use for that, old son," he remarked; "more uses than one, in fact. But first let us hand the big boy into Rusty's tender care."

Despite physical weakness, Von Stromm, who understood English, drew himself up arrogantly and swaggered through the snow to the tank. But he jerked back sharply as the gunner's coal-black face peered out of the turret at him.

"Mighty pleased to meet yo', old hoss," Rusty grinned when Tom had introduced the captive. "Come right in and warm yo' big feet, sah! Nasty weather fo' de time ob de year."

"D-der Hottentot!" Von Stromm gulped.

"A West Indian, old sir," explained Tom in English. "Now kindly shake the snow off those lovely sables and get aboard. This happens to be our busy day."

Accompanied by Tich, he went to examine the weird vehicle astern. It was a new type of flame-thrower bearing the name "Dragon" in German, small compared to the tank, and fitted with a steel spout in front. Little Tich, the expert mechanic, soon worried out how it worked and explained the various points.

"Move the tank back, chum," Tom ordered. "Then we'll try this fire-buggy out."

When the Jumbo had been moved, he and Tich got aboard the flame-thrower and drove it slowly forward.

"Right!" Tom said. "Turn on the gas!"

Tich opened a valve and pressed a button to generate an electric spark. Immediately a searing flame shot out of the steel spout and rapidly melted the solid ridge of snow.

"O.K.!" Tom exclaimed. "That'll do, old son—don't waste it. I'm going to take this gas-wagon along with me."

They secured a stout rope from the Jumbo, hitched their strange prize on behind, and joined Rusty and the luckless general in the tank.

"Drive on, Tich!" Tom ordered. "We can get through the gap. Then set a course south-east for the Klev Viaduct."

Once the Jumbo was under way, he explained the scheme he had conceived—a daredevil plan typical of him, yet so audacious that it fairly took his chums' breath away. He not only intended to view the viaduct, but to destroy it if possible.

"We'll try the stunt, anyhow," Tom affirmed. "I'll handle the Dragon myself, and you chaps must hare back to Olniv in the old Jumbo if anything happens to me. Now, general, I must request you to lend me that fancy get-up of yours."

Von Stromm protested furiously, but piped down when Rusty, assuming a fierce look, uplifted a revolver-butt above his head. So Tom quickly made a change of uniforms with the exalted prisoner, whilst the tank rumbled on towing the flame-thrower that little Tich had dubbed "Fire-Breathing Fritz."

"All serene," Tom said. "Stop her."

His pals grinned broadly when he climbed out of the tank arrayed in the general's medal-decorated uniform, the sable overcoat, and monocle complete.

"The Jerry engineers don't know there's a brass-hat anywhere around," remarked Tom confidently. "Most generals stick a hundred miles behind the lines. So none of the Jerries at the viaduct are likely to have seen Von Stromm before. But I'll keep this coat-collar turned up, and dust the handsome old facepiece with snow for further disguise."

A minute or two later he was driving ahead in the flame-thrower, with Tich bringing the tank along in his tracks.

The air cleared enough to give a view of about two hundred yards, when the two armoured vehicles found an icy track leading into a deep, natural cutting that the viaduct spanned. Soon Tom saw the mighty structure itself with men working at the base of the giant trestles. The Klev Viaduct was nearly ready for use; indeed, the first troop train was waiting on the high embankment at the far side, to cross when the last supports had been strengthened.

"Now for it!" Tom muttered.

Greatly daring, he drove the flame-thrower directly towards the workers. Two German army lorries with tarpaulins strapped over the bonnets were parked near by, and a number of drums of petrol littered the ground.

Tom opened his sable overcoat, revealing the medal-adorned tunic, and fixed the monocle in his eye. Then he leaned out of the Dragon, and the non-coms sprang to attention.

"Himmel! Get those petrol drums out of the way!" he roared in German. "Stack them neatly by the timbers of the viaduct."

"Ja, mein general!" gasped a sergeant.

The job was done in quick time, and Tom drove the flame-thrower forward again. A young officer, a captain, came hurriedly from a lone hutment, and, saluting smartly, showed surprise at the arrival of the brass-hat in so strange a vehicle. Whereupon Tom told him the yarn in German—the same story that Von Stromm had narrated of his own adventures.

The captain stepped closer and peered at his snow-dusted face.

"You—you are General Wilhelm von Stromm, mein herr?" he asked.

"Ja!" Tom snapped. "I have come to inspect the work here."

Instantly the German officer whipped out a revolver.

"Strange that I do not recognise you, mein friend," he sneered. "For I am Captain Oscar von Stromm, the general's nephew. Get out!"

A chill ran up and down Tom's spine. He partly got out of the flame-thrower, then glanced backward, with a forced smile.

"So? But you are a dead man, little captain," he grunted in German. "See there! The quick-firing gun of that British tank has you covered."

The tank was unrecognisable as British owing to the frost that covered the markings. But the captain cast an alarmed look towards it—and Tom's fist lashed out like the kick of a mule to sprawl him senseless in the snow. Before the German soldiers could recover from their stupefaction he operated the gadgets to emit the Dragon's fiery breath.

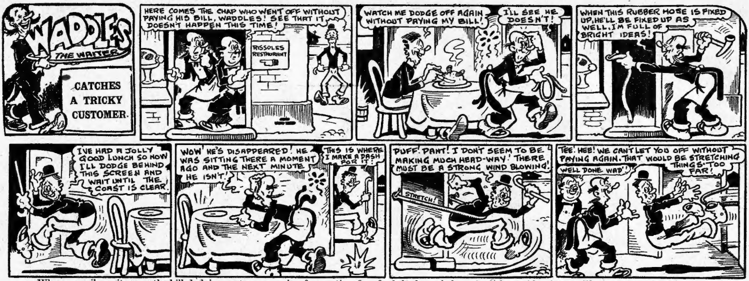
A mighty tongue of flame leaped from the steel spout full against the petrol drums, that quickly exploded into a roaring bonfire. In a matter of seconds the great timbers of the Klev Viaduct were ablaze with smoke belching in pungent clouds on the wind.

Rusty and Tich opened a hot fire that drove the Germans to cover, and then both the Jumbo and Dragon clattered away at top speed and vanished through the screen of swirling snow. Behind them devouring flames greedily licked through the trestles of the newly repaired viaduct until the whole structure was a seething holocaust of fire!

From the safe distance of a couple of miles the pals heard a dull crump borne on the wind that marked the collapse of the mighty Klev Viaduct in blazing ruins.

Evading the German strong-points again, they made their way back to the base at Olniv to report and hand over their prisoner.

(Another thrilling war story in our next number, on sale Friday week.)


WADDLES
THE WAITER
CATCHES A TRICKY CUSTOMER.
HERE COMES THE CHAP WHO WENT OFF WITHOUT PAYING HIS BILL, WADDLES! SEE THAT IT DOESN'T HAPPEN THIS TIME!
RISSOLES RESTAURANT
WATCH ME DODGE OFF AGAIN WITHOUT PAYING MY BILL!
I'LL SEE HE DOESN'T!
WHEN THIS RUBBER HOSE IS FIXED UP, HE'LL BE FIXED UP AS WELL. I'M FULL OF BRIGHT IDEAS!
I'VE HAD A JOLLY GOOD LUNCH SO NOW I'LL DODGE BEHIND THIS SCREEN AND WAIT UNTIL THE COAST IS CLEAR.
WOW! HE'S DISAPPEARED! HE WAS SITTING THERE A MOMENT AGO AND THE NEXT MINUTE HE ISN'T!
THIS IS WHERE I MAKE A DASH FOR IT!
PUFF! PANT! I DON'T SEEM TO BE MAKING MUCH HEAD-WAY! THERE MUST BE A STRONG WIND BLOWING!
STRETCH!
TEE! HEE! WE CAN'T LET YOU OFF WITHOUT PAYING AGAIN. THAT WOULD BE STRETCHING THINGS TOO FAR!
WELL DONE WAD'!

When our wily waiter saw the bill-dodging customer coming for another free feed, he barred the exit with a rubber hose. That soon stopped his gallop !

PLUM AND DUFF, THE BOYS OF THE BOLD BRIGADE!

HERE YOU ARE, A NICE FAT PARCEL FOR YOU TWO!
PLUM & DUFF
G.P.O.

1. The postman had rolled up with a nice, big parcel for the boys. “ Goody-goody ! ” gurgled Plum. “ I wonder what's inside ? ” So—

COO! A POSH PLANE! LET'S WIND IT UP!
HO! I'M IN ON THIS!

2. They unwrapped it and found a model plane inside. “ Just what we wanted ! ” tootled Duff, as Plum wound it up. Then Suet came along.

3. He'd been hanging around, and thought he'd have a bit of fun with that plane, too. But when they sent it flying, it caught Suet—zonk !

YAH! YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE!

4. Yes, it banged right into his sniffer, and he lost his temper properly. “ That was no accident ! ” he hooted, booting Plum and Duff.

NOW YOU'LL BOTH COME WITH ME TO THE COLONEL!

5. Even then he hadn't finished with our nibs. “ Now I'll run you both before the colonel ! ” he snorted. “ Up you come, and get cracking ! ”

I'LL WIND IT UP AND SHOW THE COLONEL JUST WHAT YOU DID TO ME, SEE!

6. Well, the boys did as they were bid, and as they toddled across to Bogey's quarters, Sergy wound the plane up, to have his complaint ready.

ASSAULTED ME THEY DID, SIR, WITH THIS—WOUND IT UP LIKE SO!
WH-R-R-R
WH-R-R
WH-R-R

7. “ Brrmps ! What's all this ? ” demanded Bogey when they arrived. So Suet said his party piece. And he continued to wind the plane.

HO! HE'S OVERWOUND THE CLOCK!

8. But unfortunately, he overdid it. All of a once, the works busted, and the plane flew into umpteen bits, which Suet and Bogey stopped.

GR-R! GERROUT OF MY SIGHT!
NOW THE OLD MAN'S GIVING SERGY THE WORKS!

9. The Old Man got properly peeved with Suet. Yes, he chased him out of it, dotting him for six all the way, to the great joy of the boys.

WE'VE STARTED A COMMANDO, MARTHA, YOU'LL HAVE TO GET YOUR WEIGHT DOWN BEFORE JOINING. LENA IS GOING TO DO HER STUFF RIGHT AWAY!
COO! FATIGUES EVERY TIME I WANT TO BE IN ON SUMMAT SPECIAL!
WASTE PAPER

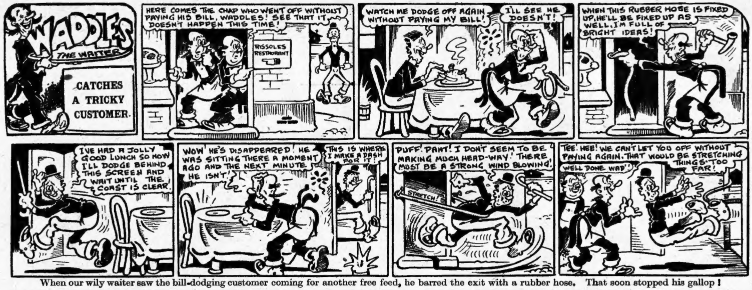
1. Our commandant started a new Commando squad last week. I had to get my weight down before I joined. “ You search for salvage ! ” she said.

I'LL SHOW 'EM I'M TOUGH BY JUMPING THIS FENCE, BUT THESE OLD INNER TUBES OFF THE DUMP WILL SOFTEN THE BUMP WHEN I LAND THIS SIDE!
TYRE SALVAGE

2. So I had to push off with the old paper pick and satchel, while Lena got ready to do her stuff. But to make sure she landed on something cushy—

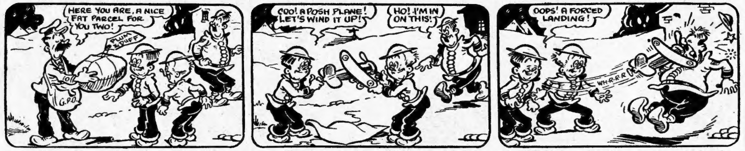
3. The artful old hussy placed some in
behind the fence. “ Now I'll show you ho
am,” leered Lena to the commandant. “ Wa

COMIC
KING OF C


WADDLES
THE WAITER
CATCHES A TRICKY CUSTOMER.
HERE COMES THE CHAP WHO WENT OFF WITHOUT PAYING HIS BILL, WADDLES! SEE THAT IT DOESN'T HAPPEN THIS TIME!
RISSOLES RESTAURANT
WATCH ME DODGE OFF AGAIN WITHOUT PAYING MY BILL!
I'LL SEE HE DOESN'T!
WHEN THIS RUBBER HOSE IS FIXED UP, HE'LL BE FIXED UP AS WELL. I'M FULL OF BRIGHT IDEAS!
I'VE HAD A JOLLY GOOD LUNCH SO NOW I'LL DODGE BEHIND THIS SCREEN AND WAIT UNTIL THE COAST IS CLEAR!
WOW! HE'S DISAPPEARED! HE WAS SITTING THERE A MOMENT AGO AND THE NEXT MINUTE HE ISN'T!
THIS IS WHERE I MAKE A DASH FOR IT!
PUFF! PANT! I DON'T SEEM TO BE MAKING MUCH HEAD-WAY! THERE MUST BE A STRONG WIND BLOWING!
STRETCH!
TEE! HEE! WE CAN'T LET YOU OFF WITHOUT PAYING AGAIN. THAT WOULD BE STRETCHING THINGS TOO FAR!
WELL DONE WAD!

When our wily waiter saw the bill-dodging customer coming for another free feed, he barred the exit with a rubber hose. That soon stopped his gallop!

PLUM AND DUFF, THE BOYS OF THE BOLD BRIGADE!


HERE YOU ARE, A NICE FAT PARCEL FOR YOU TWO!
PLUM & DUFF
G.P.O.
COO! A POSH PLANE! LET'S WIND IT UP!
HO! I'M IN ON THIS!
OOPS! A FORCED LANDING!
WH-R-R-R

1. The postman had rolled up with a nice, big parcel for the boys. "Goody-goody!" gurgled Plum. "I wonder what's inside?" So—

2. They unwrapped it and found a model plane inside. "Just what we wanted!" tootled Duff, as Plum wound it up. Then Suet came along.

3. He'd been hanging around, and thought he'd have a bit of fun with that plane, too. But when they sent it flying, it caught Suet—zonk!

YAH! YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE!
NOW YOU'LL BOTH COME WITH ME TO THE COLONEL!
I'LL WIND IT UP AND SHOW THE COLONEL JUST WHAT YOU DID TO ME, SEE!

4. Yes, it banged right into his sniffer, and he lost his temper properly. "That was no accident!" he hooted, booting Plum and Duff.

5. Even then he hadn't finished with our nibs. "Now I'll run you both before the colonel!" he snorted. "Up you come, and get cracking!"

6. Well, the boys did as they were bid, and as they toddled across to Bogey's quarters, Sergy wound the plane up, to have his complaint ready.

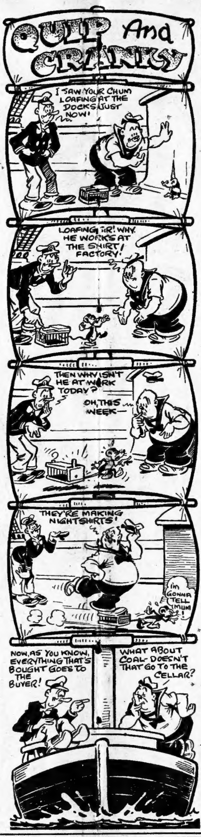
ASSAULTED ME THEY DID, SIR, WITH THIS—WOUND IT UP LIKE SO!
WH-R-R-R
HO! HE'S OVERWOUND THE CLOCK!
GR-R! GERROUT OF MY SIGHT!
NOW THE OLD MAN'S GIVING SERGY THE WORKS!

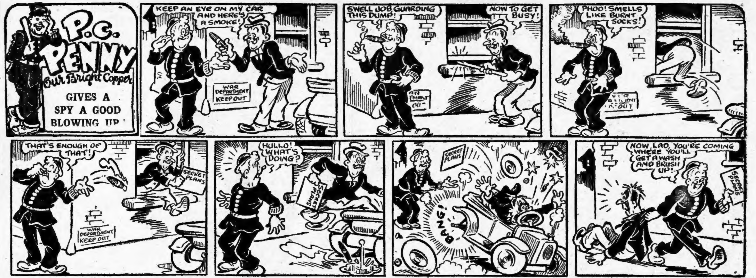
7. "Brrmps! What's all this?" demanded Bogey when they arrived. So Suet said his party piece. And he continued to wind the plane.

8. But unfortunately, he overdid it. All of a once, the works busted, and the plane flew into umpteen bits, which Suet and Bogey stopped.

9. The Old Man got properly peeved with Suet. Yes, he chased him out of it, dotting him for six all the way, to the great joy of the boys.

COMIC CUTS—
KING OF COMICS.


QUIP And CRANKY
I SAW YOUR CHUM LOAFING AT THE DOCKS JUST NOW!
LOAFING SIR! WHY, HE WORKS AT THE SHIRT FACTORY!
THEN WHY ISN'T HE AT WORK TODAY?
OH, THIS WEEK—
THEY'RE MAKING NIGHTSHIRTS!
I'M GONNA TELL MUM!
NOW, AS YOU KNOW, EVERYTHING THAT'S BOUGHT GOES TO THE BUYER!
WHAT ABOUT COAL- DOESN'T THAT GO TO THE CELLAR?


P.C. PENNY
Our Bright Copper
GIVES A SPY A GOOD BLOWING UP
KEEP AN EYE ON MY CAR AND HERE'S A SMOKE!
WAR DEPARTMENT KEEP OUT
SWELL JOB GUARDING THIS DUMP!
NOW TO GET BUSY!
PHOO! SMELLS LIKE BURNT SOCKS!
THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT!
SECRET PLANS
HULLO! WHAT'S DOING?
BANG!
NOW, LAD, YOU'RE COMING WHERE YOU'LL GET A WASH AND BRUSH UP!

Penny thought he had clicked for a jammy job until the cigar proved a dud. However, when the weed dropped in the petrol the spy got an unexpected tip.

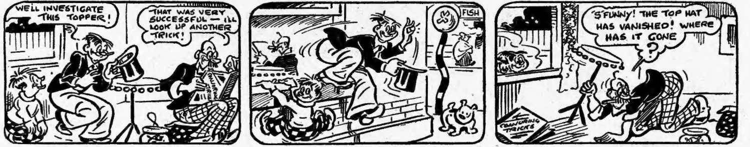
BIG BEN AND LITTLE LEN, THE LARKY LADS!

NOW WATCH CLOSELY, BOYS—I DROP THIS HALF CROWN INTO THE HAT —SO—!
CONJURING TRICKS
THEN A FEW PASSES WITH THE MAGIC-WAND!
HOOEY!
—AND HEY PRESTO! THAT PIECE OF SILVER HAS TURNED INTO A BOWL OF GOLD FISH!
NOT BAD FOR AN 'AMMERCHEWER!
CORE!

1. Pa had bought a book on conjuring and was trying out a trick on the lads. First he dropped a half-crown into the upturned silk shiner.

2. "Nice work so far, Pa!" piped Len. "What happens now?" "Ah! Next I make a few passes with the magic wand!" piped Pop.

3. "And then—up she comes! A gowl of bold-fish—I mean a bowl of goldfish, in place of the half-crown! Howzat?" Well, the lads cheered.


WE'LL INVESTIGATE THIS TOPPER!
THAT WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL—I'LL LOOK UP ANOTHER TRICK!
FISH
'S'FUNNY! THE TOP HAT HAS VANISHED! WHERE HAS IT GONE ?
CONJURING TRICKS

4. So, greatly encouraged, Pa turned to the book for another trick to perform. But while he was thus engaged, Ben had a dekko in the hat.

5. And next tick, he and Len oozled through the open window without saying a word to the old parent. For Ben had found the half-crown!

6. It came as a shock to Pa to find that he no longer had an audience. But what mystified him still more was that his topper had gone, too!

HERE IT IS, PA—YOU LEFT THAT HALF-CROWN IN THE LINING—
CONJURING TRICKS
—AND WE'VE TURNED IT INTO TWO LOTS OF FISH AND CHIPS!
MAGIC!
AND IT'S VERY TASTY—VERY SWEET!

7. While he was searching all over the place for it, back came the lads via the window. "If you want your lid, Pa, here it is!" piped Ben.

8. "That half-crown was in the lining—as if you didn't know!" he went on. "So we've done a trick with it—turned it into fish and chips!"

9. Well, that finished Pa as a conjurer, and he hurled his outfit after them as they did a bunk down the street, enjoying a very nice feed!

WE'VE STARTED A COMMANDO, MARTHA, YOU'LL HAVE TO GET YOUR WEIGHT DOWN BEFORE JOINING, LENA IS GOING TO DO HER STUFF RIGHT AWAY!
COO! FATIGUES EVERY TIME I WANT TO BE IN ON SUMMAT SPECIAL!
WASTE PAPER
I'LL SHOW 'EM I'M TOUGH BY JUMPING THIS FENCE, BUT THESE OLD INNER TUBES OFF THE DUMP WILL SOFTEN THE BUMP WHEN I LAND THIS SIDE!
TYRE SALVAGE
HERE I GO!
GOOD JOB I CAME ROUND HERE! THESE TUBES SHOULD BE IN THE SALVAGE!
THE OLD SWANK!
THIS LOT IS GOING BACK ON THE TYRE DUMP RIGHT NOW!
LENA'S LANDED
BANG!
WASTE PAPER
SALVAGE BIN
HEE! MY WORD, YOU ARE IN A HOLE NOW, LENA!
DIGGING YOURSELF IN, GAL?

1. Our commandant started a new Commando squad last week. I had to get my weight down before I joined. "You search for salvage!" she said.

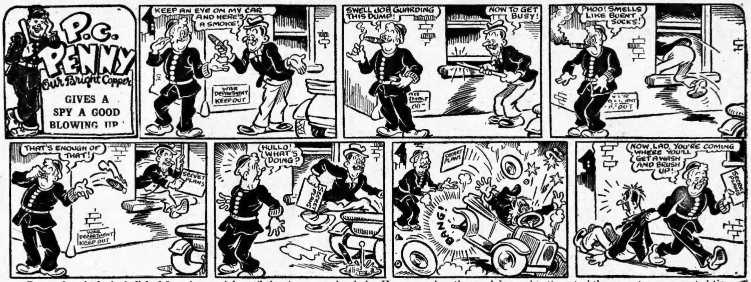
2. So I had to push off with the old paper pick and satchel, while Lena got ready to do her stuff. But to make sure she landed on something cushy—

3. The artful old hussy placed some inner tubes behind the fence. "Now I'll show you how tough I am," leered Lena to the commandant. "Watch this!"

4. Now my pet duck was helping me pick up the salvage, and when Marcus spotted those old rubber wind-tubes, he promptly carried them to the dump.

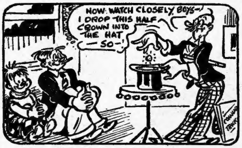
5. Two ticklets later old Lena leapt high o'er the fence, much to the amazement of our commandant. "She's made a crash landing I do believe!" I said.

6. And when I came to look, there, sure enough, was Lena in a nice old hole. "Ha, ha! You don't look so tough now!" I laughed.—MARTHA. 25-4-42

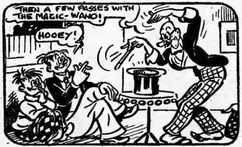

P.C. PENNY
Our Bright Copper
GIVES A SPY A GOOD BLOWING UP
KEEP AN EYE ON MY CAR AND HERE'S A SMOKE!
WAR DEPARTMENT KEEP OUT
SWELL JOB GUARDING THIS DUMP!
NOW TO GET BUSY!
PHOO! SMELLS LIKE BURNT SOCKS!
THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT!
SECRET PLANS
HULLO! WHAT'S DOING?
BANG!
NOW, LAD, YOU'RE COMING WHERE YOU'LL GET A WASH AND BRUSH UP!

Penny thought he had clicked for a jammy job until the cigar proved a dud. However, when the weed dropped in the petrol the spy got an unexpected tip.

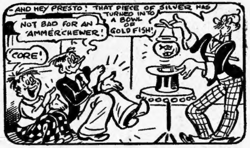
BIG BEN AND LITTLE LEN, THE LARKY LADS!


NOW WATCH CLOSELY, BOYS—I DROP THIS HALF CROWN INTO THE HAT—SO—!
CONJURING TRICKS

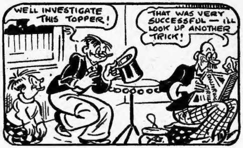
1. Pa had bought a book on conjuring and was trying out a trick on the lads. First he dropped a half-crown into the upturned silk shiner.


THEN A FEW PASSES WITH THE MAGIC-WAND!
HOOEY!

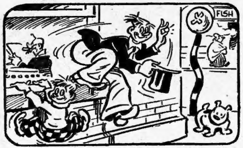
2. "Nice work so far, Pa!" piped Len. "What happens now?" "Ah! Next I make a few passes with the magic wand!" piped Pop.


—AND HEY PRESTO! THAT PIECE OF SILVER HAS TURNED INTO A BOWL OF GOLDFISH!
NOT BAD FOR AN 'AMMERCHEWER!
CORE!

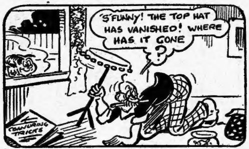
3. "And then—up she comes! A gowl of boldfish—I mean a bowl of goldfish, in place of the half-crown! Howzat?" Well, the lads cheered.


WE'LL INVESTIGATE THIS TOPPER!
THAT WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL—I'LL LOOK UP ANOTHER TRICK!
CONJURING TRICKS

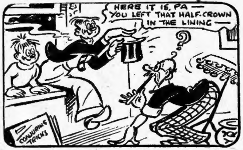
4. So, greatly encouraged, Pa turned to the book for another trick to perform. But while he was thus engaged, Ben had a dekko in the hat.



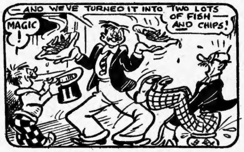
5. And next tick, he and Len oozled through the open window without saying a word to the old parent. For Ben had found the half-crown!


S'FUNNY! THE TOP HAT HAS VANISHED! WHERE HAS IT GONE
?
CONJURING TRICKS

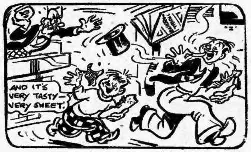
6. It came as a shock to Pa to find that he no longer had an audience. But what mystified him still more was that his topper had gone, too!


HERE IT IS, PA—YOU LEFT THAT HALF-CROWN IN THE LINING—
?
CONJURING TRICKS

7. While he was searching all over the place for it, back came the lads via the window. "If you want your lid, Pa, here it is!" piped Ben.

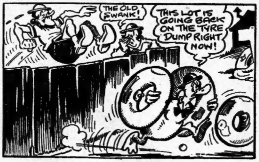

—AND WE'VE TURNED IT INTO TWO LOTS OF FISH—AND CHIPS!
MAGIC!

8. "That half-crown was in the lining—as if you didn't know!" he went on. "So we've done a trick with it—turned it into fish and chips!"

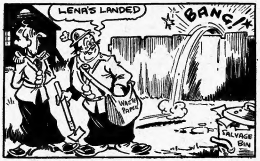

AND IT'S VERY TASTY—VERY SWEET!

9. Well, that finished Pa as a conjurer, and he hurled his outfit after them as they did a bunk down the street, enjoying a very nice feed!

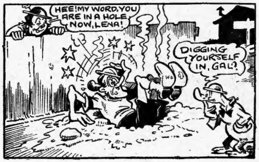
e inner tubes
n how tough I
Watch this!"


THE OLD SWANK!
THIS LOT IS GOING BACK ON THE TYRE DUMP RIGHT NOW!

4. Now my pet duck was helping me pick up the salvage, and when Marcus spotted those old rubber wind-tubes, he promptly carried them to the dump.



5. Two ticklets later old Lena leapt high o'er the fence, much to the amazement of our commandant. "She's made a crash landing I do believe!" I said.


HEE! MY WORD, YOU ARE IN A HOLE NOW, LENA!
DIGGING YOURSELF IN, GAL?

6. And when I came to look, there, sure enough, was Lena in a nice old hole. "Ha, ha! You don't look so tough now!" I laughed.—MARTHA. 25-4-42

Kenton Steel's Latest Case.

THE FOURTH ROOM!

A Strange Mystery.

IT was a run of just over an hour on a pleasant spring morning that brought Kenton Steel and his assistant, Nutty Brown, to the house known as Greystones, just beyond the quiet village of Kenston.

Mr. Gardiner, the owner of Greystones, received them cordially, and in a few minutes all three were seated in a large, well-furnished room. Steel's client lost no time in explaining why he had summoned the crime-smasher by phone to come down and see him.

"Three times in as many weeks this house has been broken into, Mr. Steel. Yet nothing whatever has been stolen. That, in a nutshell, is why you are here. It's all very mystifying to me, and, of course, there is the possibility that it may happen again in the future. So I want it stopped if possible."

"I quite understand that," responded Steel. "It certainly is strange. You are sure, by the way, that the house has been broken into on three occasions?"

"Positive!" was the emphatic retort. "For the very good reason that each time I disturbed the intruder, who promptly fled. I had no chance to see him, but I heard him plainly enough scampering across the lawn in the darkness."

"I see," nodded Steel. "When was the last time?"

"Last night," replied Mr. Gardiner. "The second occurred a week ago, the first some ten or twelve days before that. I am a light sleeper, and the least sound wakens me. On each occasion, aware that something suspicious was happening downstairs, I slipped on a dressing-gown and came down to investigate. But the housebreaker was evidently much on the alert, and although I was careful to be as silent as possible, he must have heard me. Anyway, as I say, he promptly took to his heels."

"Any idea how he got into the house?" inquired Steel.

"By a window," was the reply. "On each occasion, in his haste to get away, he left it open. It's the window of a small back room, and gives straight on to the lawn."

"And was this intruder in the same room each time?" asked Steel.

"No, a different one," Mr. Gardiner told him. "The first time it was the dining-room, then the library, and last night it was this room. They all open on to the hall, and he only had to cross that into the small room to make his escape by the open window I have mentioned."

Steel nodded thoughtfully.

"Have you mentioned the matter to the police?" he asked.

"Yes, I promptly informed them after the first breaking in," replied his client. "An officer came along and had a look round. I think the fact that nothing was stolen took all the interest out of the affair as far as he was concerned. Anyway, he went away and I have heard nothing from him since. So I did not trouble to report the second affair, while the third, last night, decided me to call you in. For I've a feeling, Mr. Steel, that there's more in this than meets the eye."

"Same here," said Steel. "It certainly is strange that in so short a time you should have been broken into on three occasions, and disturbed the intruder in a different room each time. The fact that he took nothing shows that he is no ordinary thief, or he could have helped himself the first time and got away with it. As it is, he's taking risks in coming back again, assuming it is the same person, of course. I think I'll have a look at that window you mentioned."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Gardiner. "Come this way."

Steel and Nutty accompanied him to a small room at the back of the house, crossing the lofty hall to reach it. The crime-smasher saw that the window had a faulty catch, which made it a simple matter to open it.

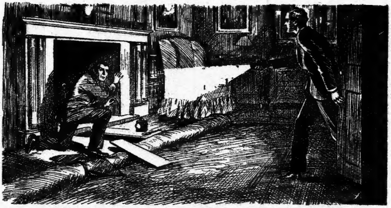
Looking out through the window, Steel saw a big expanse of grounds with open country beyond. He realised that on a dark night anyone would be quickly swallowed up in the gloom and a getaway would be a simple matter.

At his request, Mr. Gardiner then took him to the three rooms he had mentioned. Steel spent a long time examining them all closely. But if he discovered anything, his mask-like face did not betray the fact.

He made his way back at last to the window with the faulty catch, and there he got busy searching for finger-prints. His efforts were rewarded, and he was able to obtain several, quite distinctly marked.

"We're getting warm, Nutty," he remarked with a smile. "Of course, if these finger-prints belong to somebody local, it's not going to be easy to fix them on the right person. But if, as I suspect is far more likely, they were made by a professional crook—well, they won't be difficult to trace. I'm banking on that, and I'm going to act accordingly. So back we go to town, Nutty."

Shortly after, Steel and Nutty took their leave of Mr. Gardiner and drove back to London, where Steel lost no time in trying to identify the finger-prints he had taken. This he succeeded in doing from his own extensive collection.



Foxy gasped and turned a startled face to Steel.

"Why, it's our old friend 'Foxy' Lang!" he suddenly told Nutty. "I remember I had the pleasure of getting him put away a couple of years ago for a series of small burglaries. Not a nice piece of work is Foxy. In addition to being a crook on his own account, he'll think nothing of squealing on an accomplice to save his own skin."

"So you think Foxy Lang is the one who's been breaking three times into Mr. Gardiner's house?" said Nutty.

"There's not much doubt about that," replied Steel.

"But what are you going to do in that case?" Nutty wanted to know. "As Foxy hasn't stolen anything from Greystones, there's nothing you can very well fix on him, is there?"

"That is so," agreed Steel. "But he hasn't taken the trouble to break into Greystones three times lately without some very good reason. And I think it would be a good idea to keep a watchful eye on the gentleman for the next few days. I know his haunts, and I think I can find him without very much trouble."

Under the Floor.

THAT same evening Steel traced Foxy Lang, who, sure enough, was living in the same squalid little street which the crime-smasher had known to be his abode when out of prison.

For two days and nights Steel and Nutty between them never let Foxy out of their sight. They took it in turns relieving each other, and it was a tiring and fruitless job.

Foxy went about like an ordinary, respectable citizen, even going to bed early. Steel was beginning to wonder whether, after all, he and Nutty were wasting their time.

But he kept on with the vigil for a third day. Nutty relieved him at tea-time, bringing with him a message that meant Steel's returning to the office at once.

"Right-ho, Nutty, carry on," he said. "I'll be back as soon as I can. Meanwhile, you know what to do."

"Sure thing, chief," replied Nutty, and Steel went off.

Just before nine o'clock that evening Steel's phone bell rang. It was Nutty who was calling him.

"I'm ringing from Victoria, chief," he said. "I've trailed Foxy here and heard him book to Kenston. He's just gone on the platform now. The train leaves in ten minutes."

"Good boy!" breathed Steel, and promptly arranged to pick Nutty up in the car in a quarter of an hour.

The train had departed before then, but Steel knew that he could beat it in the race to Kenston, for it stopped at every station. There was no moon, but the sky was spangled with myriad stars, enabling him to career along at a good, though safe pace.

Greystones was reached, and Mr. Gardiner showed his surprise at seeing his two visitors. His surprise increased when he heard Steel's news.

"I've a hunch that our housebreaking friend is on his way here to break in again," said the crime-smasher. "I particularly want to find out what his game is if I can."

"Is there anything I can do to help?" asked Mr. Gardiner.

"Yes, you can go up to your room and keep perfectly quiet," replied Steel. "And you, Nutty, you'd better make yourself scarce, too."

He walked out of the room into the big hall and looked around.

"Now to station myself," he went on. "Let me see. Apart from the small room with the useful window, which I needn't worry about, there are four other rooms on this ground floor. Three of them—those"—he pointed to the doors of each in turn—"those three have already had their visit. So I'll place myself in the fourth room."

All three entered that apartment, and Steel promptly gave a little grunt of approval.

"Splendid!" he said, coming to a big cupboard. "An ideal hiding-place."

Having switched off all lights, he stepped into the cupboard and pulled the doors to. Then he waited, hopefully and patiently.

His position was none too comfortable, and the waiting seemed long. An hour passed and nothing broke the silence save the slow, sombre ticking of the big grandfather clock in the hall.

Steel was getting cramped and not a little stifled. He pushed the doors open slightly to admit air—and a few moments later pulled them shut again.

For a sound had caught his alert ear. Somebody was fumbling with the faulty window catch. Steel had purposely left open the door of that room, too.

Very slightly he eased open one cupboard door. He listened for footsteps, but heard none for some time. Then the slightest of cautious footfalls reached his ear—and it came from not far away.

The intruder had entered that room. Another silence, lasting several moments. Then a second footfall, nearer this time. It sounded to Steel as coming from across the room by the fireplace.

All suddenly a light was switched on, down on the floor. A soft, flopping sound followed that mystified Steel for a moment—but only for a moment. Then he recognised it—the carpet was being rolled back.

Now came the soft sound of quiet breathing. Other sounds followed, a slight rasp of metal on metal, followed by the careful putting down of a piece of wood.

For some minutes more Steel waited. Then very cautiously he swung open the cupboard door, which, fortunately, moved silently on well-oiled hinges.

A strange sight met his eyes, and his jaw set grimly. Down on the floor in front of the mantelpiece a man was kneeling on bare floorboards where the carpet had been rolled back. Part of the flooring had been removed, and the light from the lantern torch by which he was working revealed a dark hole.

"Now then!" came from the kneeling man. "Perhaps this time I shall be lucky."

He groped a hand in the aperture and a gurgle escaped him as he withdrew it again, clutching something that sparkled. He gazed at a valuable diamond necklace for some seconds, then stowed it away in his pocket.

"Got it at last!" he murmured. "And the rest will be there, too. My luck's in."

"That's where you're wrong, Foxy, your luck's right out!" broke in the quiet voice of Kenton Steel.

Foxy gasped and turned a startled face as Steel stepped out of his hiding-place, his own pocket torch switched on.

"Who—who are you?" gulped the intruder, shooting to his feet. "I—I know that voice."

"You ought to, Foxy," retorted Steel as, with a bound, he reached the man and clutched his wrist in a vice-like grip. "I'm Kenton Steel. I was expecting you to-night—and now I've discovered the reason for your visits."

Foxy Lang was quivering from head to foot, so utterly amazed as to be incapable even of struggling, let alone taking to flight. Steel dragged him to the electric switch and flooded the room with light, at the same time calling to Mr. Gardiner and Nutty to come down.

"Here's your housebreaker, Mr. Gardiner," said Steel. "Just hold him whilst I do some more fishing in that hole he's made in the floor."

Whilst Mr. Gardiner and Nutty held Foxy securely between them, Steel groped in the hole and produced a mass of glittering jewellery, all stolen property.

And then the squeaker came out in Foxy Lang, and he blurted out everything in an endeavour to save himself.

"You ain't got nothing on me, Mr. Steel!" he cried. "I didn't pinch that lot! I'll tell you the truth!"

And Foxy Lang told how, while in prison, he had overheard two old lags comparing notes. One of them had, a long time before, been employed at Greystones by the gentleman who lived there before Mr. Gardiner had bought the place.

This man, Harvey, a clever thief and burglar, had committed many robberies, whilst posing as a respectable manservant, and had concealed the loot under the floorboards, intending to get away with the lot in due course.

But he had been caught red-handed in one burglary and had gone to prison. There Foxy had heard his story, learning that the stolen jewellery had been hidden under the flooring before the fireplace in one of the rooms in Greystones, near Kenston.

That much he knew, but Foxy did not know which room. Hence his several visits, in an endeavour to trace the right one. Unfortunately for him, the very night he had succeeded, Kenton Steel had turned up to spoil his plans.

(Another Kenton Steel story in our next number, on sale Friday week.)

A yarn to make you smile!

WHAT LUCK!

Dining Out!

HUMMING a merry tune, and glad to be home at the end of the day, Tim Todger let himself into the little house where he lived with his buxom wife, Emma.

And the next moment the merry tune dried up suddenly, whilst Tim staggered back into the open. For the hall was filled with a bluish smoke, and there was a strong smell of burning.

"Jumping jamjars!" he gasped. "Is the house on fire or what?"

The figure of his wife appeared, and she came to the front door, her face red and hot.

"It's all right, Timothy," she said. "I left the gas too high in the oven and it's burnt the meat a bit. Leave the door open, it will let the smoke out."

"Oh, so that's what it is, eh?" spluttered Tim, following his wife through to the kitchen. "I hope I haven't come home tired and hungry after a hard day's work to find the dinner done in."

"Well, I'm afraid it won't be too good," replied Mrs. Todger, opening the oven and taking out a small piece of meat.

"You're telling me!" hooted Tim, after one glance at it. "Why, it's burnt to a cinder!"

"Well, I can only say I'm sorry, dear," said Mrs. Todger. "But everything seems to have gone wrong for me to-day. one way and another. Not that I'm surprised. It's Friday, you know."

"What's that got to do with it?" snorted Tim.

"Well, Friday's always an unlucky day, isn't it?" said the lady.

"Unlucky fiddlesticks!" cried Tim. "Don't talk such utter nonsense. You and your superstitions! You get me down! Friday's no more unlucky than any other day."

"I say it is!" insisted his wife.

"And I say it isn't!" retorted Tim. "It's been lucky for me, anyhow. I bumped into a chap to-day whom I lent a quid to over a year ago—never thought I'd ever see him or it again. And he gave me back the money. You can't call that unlucky, can you?"

"Well, no, I suppose not," admitted Mrs. Todger grudgingly. "Still——"

"There's no still about it," Tim broke in. "The only unlucky thing is that now we shall have to go and have dinner out somewhere. We can't possibly eat that burnt piece of meat. A good job I did click for that quid to-day."

The joint was put into the larder to cool, Mrs. Todger declaring that she would be able to make something out of it in due course. A little later she and Tim got ready to go out.

"What's the idea?" asked Timothy, seeing his wife taking her umbrella out of the hall-stand.

"It might rain," she explained.

"Rain my foot!" was the snorted retort. "There's no chance of it's raining to-night. Besides, that gamp has got a split in it, if I remember rightly."

He took it from his wife and opened it. Instantly the lady gave a screech.

"Oh, Tim!" she cried. "What are you doing?"

"You can see what I'm doing," said Tim. "Looking for that split. There it is!"

"Yes, but—but you know it's most unlucky to open an umbrella in the house!" his wife told him.

Tim closed the gamp with a snap and slammed it back in its stand.

"There you go again!" he barked. "More superstitious nonsense! Stop talking such piffle and let's be getting along."

"I'm sure something awful will happen," mumbled Mrs. Todger, as she followed her husband outside. "Fancy opening an umbrella indoors!"

He jumped on the chair and emptied the salt-cellar.

Fortunately, Tim did not hear her, or he might have started another argument. In silence the pair plodded along for about ten minutes.

They turned into a street where building operations were in progress, although work had ceased for the day. A tall ladder had been left against the wall so that the base was in the gutter.

"Mind that ladder, Timothy!" said Mrs. Todger.

"Mind it?" he yapped. "What on earth do I want to mind it for? Nobody's likely to sneak it, and if they did, I needn't worry. It doesn't belong to me."

"I didn't mean that," said Mrs. Todger. "I meant don't walk under it—it's unlucky to walk under a ladder."

Tim drew himself up to his full height of five feet nothing and glared at his better half.

"If you don't stop this unlucky business, madam," he snorted, "I'll go and have grub somewhere by myself and let you go back home and enjoy that lump of meat you've scorched to a cinder."

"Oh, all right!" said Mrs. Todger, with an air of resignation. "You can do as you like, but I'm not walking under that ladder!"

"Well, I am!" Tim told her, and promptly proceeded to do so, whilst his wife walked round it.

Nothing happened, and Tim presented a defiant face at her.

"You see!" he said. "All boloney! I walked under the ladder and nothing happened at all."

Mrs. Todger was wise enough to keep her mouth shut and make no reply to that, and they continued on their way.

"Where do you intend going for this meal?" the lady asked presently.

"Well, I thought we'd try the Splitz Restaurant," replied Tim. "It's rather a posh place, but I've got that unexpected quid, so we may as well splash it a bit. Another five minutes and we shall be there. Aha! What's this I see? A pin!"

At that moment he caught sight of a large safety pin lying on the pavement. Mrs. Todger saw it, too.

"Ooh, see a pin and pick it up and all the day you'll have good luck!" she tootled. "I'm so glad to see you picking it up, dear."

Tim was bending to pick up the pin, but he straightened himself at once at these words.

"Will you stop talking this punk about luck!" he roared. "That's not why I'm picking up the pin at all. It's simply because it's a very useful article, which should not be wasted, especially these days. You never know when it might come in handy."

Once again he bent down and picked up the pin. And as he did so he gave a spluttered gasp.

"Bust it!" he snorted, as he uprighted himself. "My braces have snapped at the back!"

"Then it's lucky you found that pin, dear!" cooed his wife triumphantly. "You can use it to mend your braces till we get home!"

"If it hadn't been for that pin I'd never have busted 'em!" snapped Tim. "So I don't see where the luck comes in."

He dodged into the doorway of a closed shop, and managed to make a temporary repair of his broken braces with the safety pin. Then he rejoined his wife, and a few minutes later the Splitz Restaurant was reached without further mishap.

"Ah! Quite a nice place!" beamed Tim. "And there's a vacant table. We'll sit there."

As soon as they'd parked themselves at the table a waiter came up to attend to them. Tim was in the best of spirits now, and looking forward to enjoying a nice meal.

He gave the order and the waiter departed. Tim rubbed his hands in anticipation of a good feed.

"I'm jolly glad we came here, my dear!" he tootled. "It's going to cost a few bob, but it'll be worth it. I'll just move this vase of flowers out of the way to make more room for the grub."

He picked up the vase which was on the centre of the table and put it on one side. As he did so his sleeve caught the salt-cellar and knocked it over, spilling a little of the contents.

"Oh, Timothy!" gasped his wife promptly. "Look what you've done! Spilt the salt!"

"Well, it's only a teeny weeny bit," replied Tim affably. "That won't matter."

"But if you spill salt it means bad luck, unless you throw some of it over your left shoulder," his wife explained. "Do that now, dear, before the waiter arrives—he's on the way."

Tim did not comply with Mrs. Todger's suggestion, however. Instead he gave her a long, fierce glare, and then rose to his feet.

"So you're trotting out that superstitious nonsense again, are you?" he roared in a voice that could be heard all over the place. "As if I haven't had enough of it this evening to last me a lifetime!"

"But if you spill salt——" his wife began, when he cut her short. "I'll spill as much as I like!" he roared. "I'll spill the whole jolly lot and chance it!"

With that he jumped on his chair, grasped the salt-cellar, and emptied it on the tablecloth. Mrs. Todger gave a suppressed shriek, whilst the approaching waiter nearly dropped the tray of grub.

"Now then, madam!" Tim went on. "You see what I've done—and you'll see if it brings me any bad luck or not!"

The manager, hearing the commotion, came hurrying up, and asked what was the matter. Tim calmed down considerably at the sight of him, for he was a big man.

"It's all right," he said, forcing a smile. "I—I was just explaining something to my wife, and a little salt got spilt. I'll soon see to that—don't worry."

Before anybody could stop him, Tim had gathered up the things on the table and placed them on the floor. Then he whisked off the tablecloth, and violently shook it to get rid of the spilt salt.

The manager hastily dodged back, whilst Mrs. Todger nearly fell off her chair. But it was a passing customer, a bearded gent, who was the unlucky one.

For the salt whizzed in his direction, so that he looked as if he'd been caught in a shower of snow. Worse than that, some hit him on the face, making him splutter and sneeze.

And as he sneezed a strange thing happened. His neatly trimmed beard went all askew, revealing the fact that it was a false one. A couple of ticks later it fell off altogether and toppled to the floor.

"Good gracious!" gasped the manager.

"Why, it's Flash Phil!" broke in a voice, as a keen-faced, clean-shaven man hurried forward "I've been looking for him for weeks."

The plain-clothes officer, for such he was, grasped the still sneezing, wanted man and hurried him outside. When the excitement had died down Tim and his wife had their feed at last.

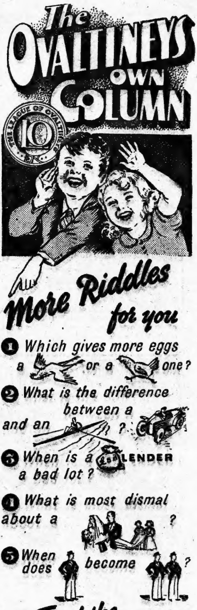
"It was lucky after all that I did spill the salt, wasn't it?" chortled Tim.

And this time the good lady really had to admit that he was right.

(Another merry yarn in our next number, on sale Friday week.)

25-4-42

Every Kind of WASTE PAPER IS NEEDED SAVE IT



The OVALTINEYS OWN COLUMN

THE LEAGUE OF OVALTINEYS

More Riddles for you

1 Which gives more eggs a or a one?

2 What is the difference between a and an ?

3 When is a LENDER a bad lot?

4 What is most dismal about a ?

5 When does become ?

To Find the Answers-

Face this paper towards a mirror

1 A DEAD ONE BECAUSE IT LAYS WHERE IT IS!

2 ONE TEARS UP THE ROAD. THE OTHER PULLS UP THE STREAM!

3 WHEN HE TAKES TOO MUCH INTEREST IN HIS BUSINESS!

4 WELL FOR A START, THE WEDDING CAKE IS GENERALLY IN TIERS!

5 WHEN HE IS BESIDE HIMSELF!

Post this Coupon to-day in open envelope—1d. stamp.

To the **CHIEF OVALTINEY,**
184, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7.

I enclose a label from a tin of 'Ovaltine' to become a member of the League of Ovaltineys. Please send, without cost to me, the Official Rule Book of the League.

Name……………………………………………

Address…………………………………………

…………………………………… *Age*…………

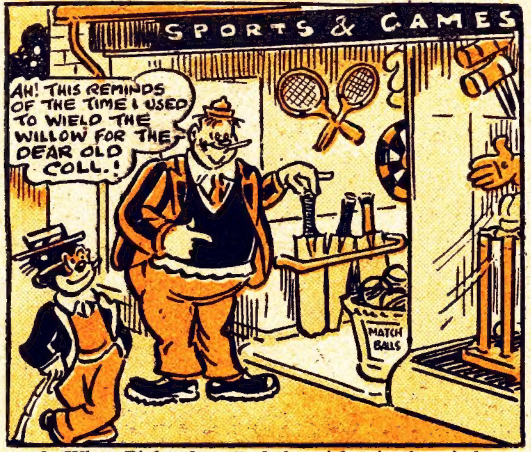
(Write in **BLOCK** letters.)

IMPORTANT.—Every application for membership must contain a label from an 'Ovaltine' tin. This can be easily removed by running a knife round it.

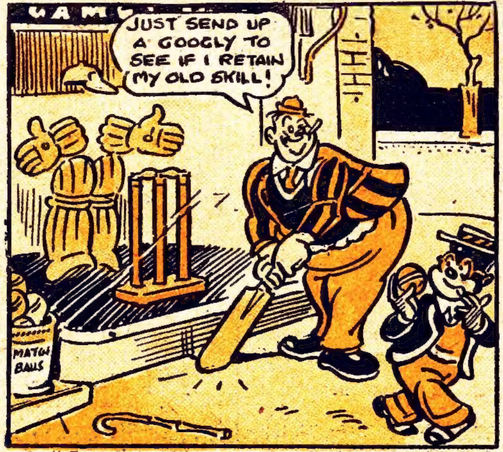
A.P. 25-4-42.

PINHEAD and PETE

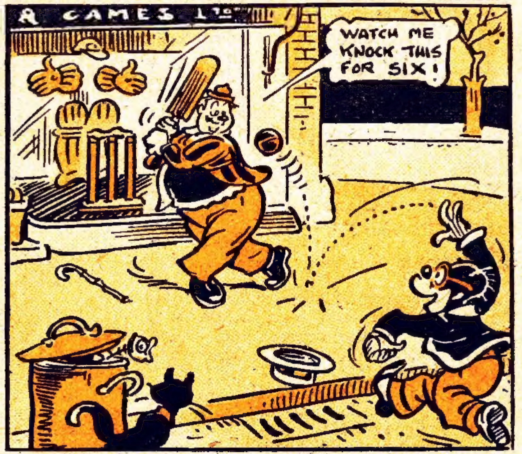
THEY SCORE ANOTHER SMASHING SUCCESS!


SPORTS & GAMES
AH! THIS REMINDS OF THE TIME I USED TO WIELD THE WILLOW FOR THE DEAR OLD COLL.!
MATCH BALLS

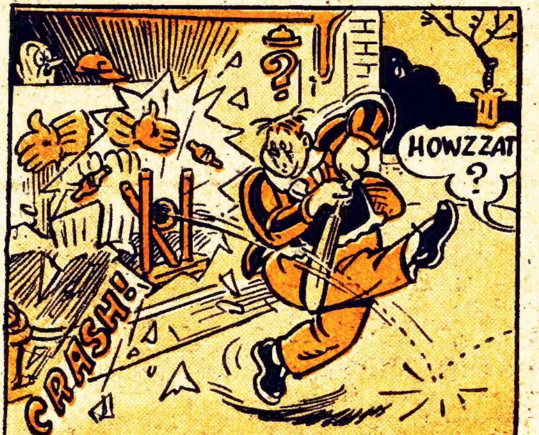
1. When Pinhead spotted the wicket in the window of the sports emporium, with a choice assortment of cricket bats all ready to hand, it reminded him of the days when he scored a hit in his old college team.


JUST SEND UP A GOOGLY TO SEE IF I RETAIN MY OLD SKILL!
MATCH BALLS

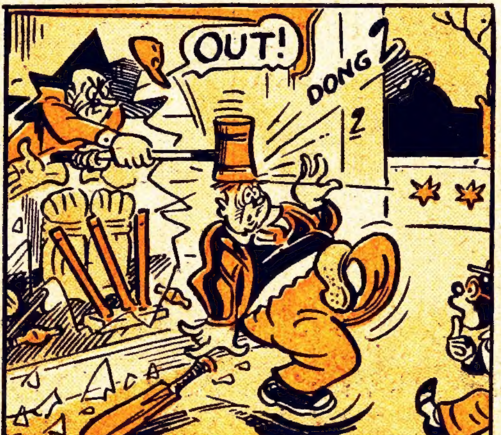
2. "Just you borrow one of those hard-baked cricket balls, Pete, and I'll show you how I used to wield the willow," said he to his old pal. "I'd like to see you bowl me out!" So the little coon obliged.


& GAMES LTD.
WATCH ME KNOCK THIS FOR SIX!

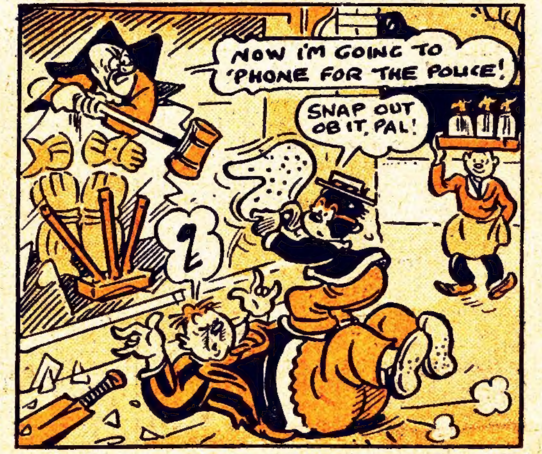
3. "Coming ober, big boy!" he cried as soon as Pinhead had struck his favourite stance in front of the shop window. "Stop dis one!" And he bowled a very hot overarm googly, which beat his pal hollow.


?
HOWZZAT ?
CRASH!

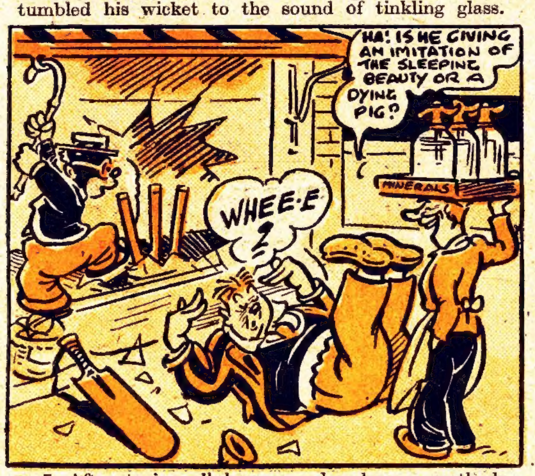
4. Anyway, instead of knocking it to the boundary for six, Pinhead missed the ball altogether and down tumbled his wicket to the sound of tinkling glass.



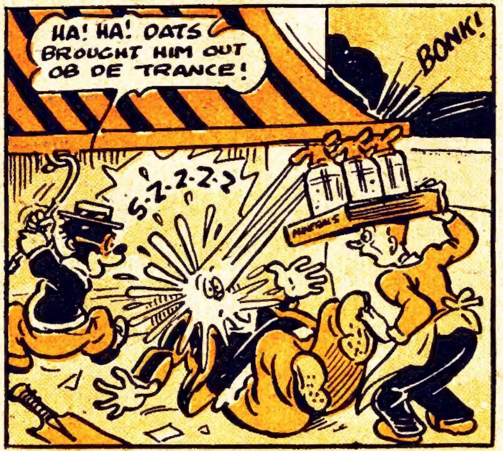
5. "Howzzat?" yelled Pete. "Out!" bellowed the angry shopman. "And so is my window!" And to stop Pinhead stealing a run, he banged him on the bean.


NOW I'M GOING TO 'PHONE FOR THE POLICE!
SNAP OUT OB IT, PAL!
Z

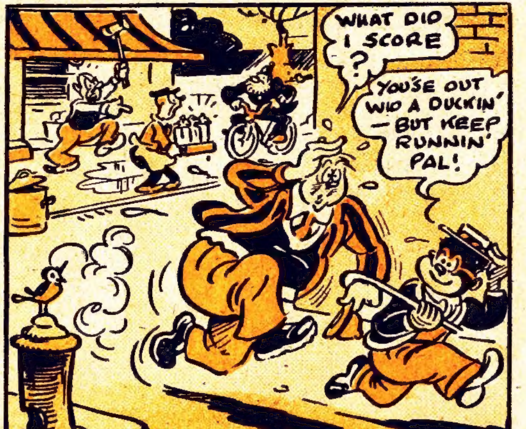
6. "Aha! That's stopped his gallop. Now I'll 'phone the police!" hooted the shopman. Pete was very surprised to see his pal down as well as out.


HA! IS HE GIVING AN IMITATION OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTY OR A DYING PIG?
MINERALS
WHEE-E ?

7. After trying all known and unknown methods of first-aid without result, he was on the point of getting the wind up when along came an errand boy with some syphons of fizz. That gave Pete an idea.

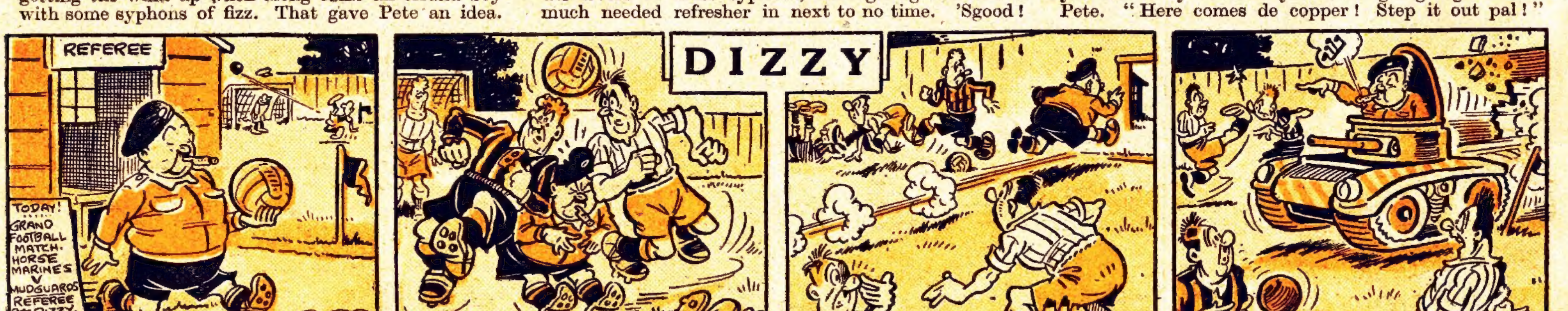

HA! HA! DATS BROUGHT HIM OUT OB DE TRANCE!
BONK!
S-Z-Z-Z-Z
MINERALS

8. Reaching up with his saucy little walking-stick, the clever coon pulled down the shop blind plonk on the levers of those syphons, thus giving Pinhead a much needed refresher in next to no time. 'Sgood!


WHAT DID I SCORE ?
YOU'SE OUT WID A DUCKIN' — BUT KEEP RUNNIN' PAL!

9. "Phew! Where am I?" he gurgled, staggering to his feet. "You're with me, pal, but I knows where you am likely to be if you don't get going!" cried Pete. "Here comes de copper! Step it out pal!"

DIZZY


REFEREE
TODAY! GRAND FOOTBALL MATCH. HORSE MARINES V MUDGUARDS REFEREE PIE DIZZY, THE TANKS

Printed in England and published every alternate Friday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.—Saturday, April 25th, 1942. SG